

Classics of Social and Political Thought—II SOSC 15200-12

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Office Hours: 3-4.30

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Section 12: 1.30-2.50
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Course Description & Aims

This quarter of the sequence focuses on key thinkers of the social contract tradition: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rigorous intellectual engagement of these thinkers should help us to better understand the concepts of authority, legitimacy, consent, and distribution in contemporary debates. While the thinkers that we read this quarter differ from last quarter's, the other aims of the course remains: of equal importance to the substantive views you develop about these concepts is training in the related skills of reading for an argument and making an argument. Practicing close reading, interpretive generosity, and the construction of arguments in writing assignments will not only help us to understand these texts better, but will also improve our ability to offer original contributions. So too will participating in class discussion, where many of your ideas will be initially formulated.

Required Texts

These books are all available for purchase from the Seminary Cooperative Bookstore. You are required to use these editions of the texts; other editions may use very different translations, which make it difficult for us to coordinate discussion. All additional readings are available via Chalk in PDF format. You should *print hard copies* of these readings and bring them with you to class.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett, 1994)

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch. (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Overview of Course Requirements

Writing Requirements

You will submit one short writing assignment and one longer paper and then have the option of writing either a final paper or taking a final exam. The first paper will be roughly 2-3 pages (no more than 1000 words) while the final paper will be about

6-8 pages (2000-3000 words). For those who chose to take it, the final exam will be a comprehensive, closed-book exam during the normal finals period. For the first and second writing assignments, I will facilitate an optional draft exchange, in which you exchange drafts with another student and provide feedback to each other. I will provide more information about these assignments as they approach.

Participation in Class Discussion

You must attend every class and be an active participant in discussion. Being prepared to participate means that you need to do the assigned reading, of course, but it also means that you must bring your copy of the text and your notes on it to each class. Participating actively in class means contributing your own comments and questions to the discussion. Everyone should be contributing every week. Don't be afraid to say something that might be wrong or that you're unsure about; what you say will likely advance the discussion anyway. If, after a couple weeks, you find that you are uncomfortable participating in group discussions, please let me know so that we can discuss possible remedies.

Posting Reading Questions

To facilitate participation, you will be required to post a question about the day's reading on your section's Chalk discussion board by midnight before each class session. Reading questions should explicitly engage with some part of the text by citing a particular passage or concept (along with relevant page numbers) and asking something specific about it.

Though we will all surely be confused in places, simply noting some difficulty is not enough. In other words, "What does the author mean here?" is not a good question; a better question takes a form like "When the author says X, does he mean this?" where you provide a candidate interpretation. To facilitate discussion, four of your posts this quarter should be responses to a question posed by another student. You can skip any two days of posting questions before it affects your class participation grade.

Grades

Reflecting the importance of the seminar format, 40% of your course grade will be class participation, which includes the quality of your posted discussion questions. The first paper is worth 20% of your grade and the final paper or exam makes 40%. Papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (i.e., a B+ becomes a B-). Extensions will be granted only in the case of documented illnesses or personal emergencies.

I do not accept papers more than 3 days late.

Because of the importance of attendance, absences will be excused only in documented cases of illness, personal emergency, or religious observance. After the first unexcused absence, each additional unexcused absence will result in a deduction of one full letter grade from your participation grade.

Obligatory Notice about Plagiarism (with additional note about the Internet)

Simply: *do not* plagiarize. If you have any questions whatsoever about the proper way to cite a source, please consult me, or refer to Charles Lipson's *How to Do Honest Work in College* (2004). Proven plagiarism can lead to automatic failure of the course and will be referred to the University administration for additional sanctions.

Even those of you who have no intention of plagiarizing will sometimes use Google and Wikipedia to do some preliminary reading before writing your papers. I strongly recommend that you not do this since it will lead you to write worse papers. Drawing your understanding of the thinkers we read from such secondary sources leads to papers that are marred by poor use of the actual text and that do not engage fully with the particular question asked.

Laptop Policy/Scribe

The convenience of computer use is subordinated to the aims of the course. To the extent that your laptop helps you to participate in class discussion, you are welcome to use it. Of course, that means internet use of any kind is prohibited. In addition, students who use their computers in class will be required to post the notes taken during class onto Chalk immediately following class. If you are not willing to do this, please do not bring a computer with you.

The exception to this policy is the rotating position of class scribe.

Winter Quarter Reading Schedule

Week One

Monday: 1/7 Introduction (Declarations)

Wednesday: 1/9 *Leviathan*, Frontispiece, Dedicatory Letter, Introduction, Chapters 1--6 (pages 1--35)

Week Two

Monday: 1/14 *Leviathan*, Chapters 7--12 (pages 35--74)

Wednesday: 1/16 *Leviathan*, Chapters 13--19 (Pages 74--127)

Week Three

Monday: 1/21 **Draft Due for Optional Paper Exchange**

NO CLASS: MLK DAY

Wednesday: 1/23 *Leviathan*, Chapters 20--25 (pages 127--172)

Week Four

Monday: 1/28 **First Writing Assignment Due**

Leviathan, Chapters 26--31 (pages 172--233)

Wednesday: 1/30 *Leviathan*, Chapters 31--32, 35--37, 38 (§§1--15), 42 (§§1--14, §§36--48, & 67--80), 43, 44 (§§1--3), 46, Review and Conclusion; (pages 233--250, 271--310, 333--341, 351--357, 366--373, 397--412, 453--468, 489--497)

Week Five

Monday: 2/4 *2nd Treatise*, Chapters 1--5 (pages 267--302)

Wednesday: 2/6 *2nd Treatise*, Chapters 6--9 (pages 303--353)

Week Six

Monday: 2/11 *2nd Treatise*, Chapters 10--15 (pages 354--384)

Wednesday: 2/13 *2nd Treatise*, Chapters 16--19 (pages 384--428)

Week Seven

Monday: 2/18

Elinor Ostrom, et. al. "*The Drama of the Commons*"—available as PDF on Chalk.

Wednesday: 2/20

Week Eight

Monday 2/25 Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Letter, Preface, and Part I (pages 111-160) and Rousseau's Notes 9--12 and 15 (pages 197--216, 218)

Wednesday 2/27 **2nd Paper Topics Out**

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Part II (pages 161--188) and Rousseau's Notes 16--19 (pages 218--222)

Week Nine

Monday 3/4 *The Social Contract*, Book I (all), Book II, Ch 1--3 (pages 41--60)

Wednesday 3/6 **Draft Due for Paper Exchange**

The Social Contract, rest of Book II (pages 61--81)

Week Ten

Monday 3/11 *The Social Contract*, Book III (81--120)

Wednesday 3/13 **Paper Exchange Drafts Due Back**

The Social Contract, Book IV (121--152)

Week Eleven

Monday 3/18– (Optional Make-up) Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" and "On the Relationship of Theory to Practice in Political Right (Against Hobbes)" (all readings on e-reserve)

Wednesday 3/20— **Final Paper Due**